### **ABSTRACT**

SATTERFIELD, SIERRA JANE. 'I Aint Tryna Die:' Intersections of Race and Gender, Legal Estrangement and Student Support for Campus Carry. (Under the direction of Dr. Stacy De Coster).

Although there is an abundance of research showing that the majority of college and university students do not support campus carry (Hassett, Kim and Seo 2020), sociological understanding of why students support or disapprove of campus carry policies remains in its infancy. Drawing on theories and concepts from sociological criminology, I develop and test theoretical arguments linking university students' views on campus carry with lived experiences that are fundamentally rooted in their race and gender positionality. I make the case that legal estrangement (including direct and vicarious experiences with law enforcement, legal cynicism, and fear of crime) is central to understanding students' attitudes toward campus carry across gender and race. To derive and test a series of hypotheses, I collected original survey data with close- and open-ended questions from college students at six universities in the southern part of the United States. With an analytic sample of 2,929 students, I used ordinal logistic regression models and general structural equation models as well as analyzed qualitative open-ended responses to test hypotheses derived from my theoretical arguments. The results are largely supportive of the theoretical arguments. The results show that race and gender intersect to inform students' feelings that they are either attached to or detached from the law and safety/protection, which ultimately inform attitudes towards guns on campus.

'I Aint Tryna Die:'	Intersections of F	Race and Gend	ler, Legal	Estrangement	and Student	Support
		for Campus	s Carry.			

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Sociology

Raleigh, North Carolina 2021

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# **BIOGRAPHY**

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### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Thank you to my family and friends for their support. Thank you to my chair, Dr. Stacy De Coster, for helping me develop my ideas, guiding me through the research process, and supporting me. Further, thank you to my committee members Dr. April Fernandes, Dr. Laura DeMarco, and Dr. Jessica Pfaffendorf for their thoughtful feedback. Thank you to Dr. Nancy Whelchel in Institutional Strategy and Analysis for helping me develop my survey instrument and encouraging me throughout my thesis project. Finally, thank you to my undergraduate mentor Dr. Lacey Wallace at Pennsylvania State University for inspiring me to pursue graduate school and motivating my current research interests.

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### INTRODUCTION

Recent cases of gun violence on university campuses have fueled political debate about gun rights on university and college campuses in the United States. Some students argue that they need to be armed to protect themselves and their classmates in the event of an active shooter (Burnett 2016), whereas others maintain that allowing guns on campus poses risks that make students less safe (Myers 2016). Much of the debate around campus carry centers on protection and student safety. The vast majority of students do not support campus carry policies that allow licensed holders to carry handguns on campus, though there are differences across race and gender in the likelihood that students support such policies with White men being most prone to support campus carry (e.g., Cavanaugh et al. 2012; Jang, Dierenfeldt and Lee 2014; Schafer et al. 2018). Theory and research in sociology have not focused on understanding why college students support or disapprove of campus carry or on why support for campus carry varies across race and gender.

My research addresses this gap in the literature, focusing on race and gender in both support for campus carry and in the reasons students offer for their views on campus carry policies. I cull insights from intersectional theory, criminology, and research on campus carry to develop and test hypotheses that consider how race and gender inform how students see themselves in relation to the law and crime and how this informs their views on policies allowing guns on campus. In particular, I focus on students' prior personal and vicarious experiences with law enforcement, feelings of legal cynicism, and fear of crime on campus as relevant for understanding their support or lack thereof for campus carry. In doing so, I draw on the theory of legal estrangement.

The theory of legal estrangement proposes that unjust experiences with law enforcement and legal cynicism (the view that the law and its enforcers are illegitimate and unable or unwilling to provide protection) combine to shape how people view themselves in relation to the law and society (Bell 2017). Central to this theory is that social contexts and lived experiences inform people's sense of belonging or detachment from the law and society. The emphasis on lived experiences paves the way for intersectional understandings of legal attitudes, including attitudes toward legal policies like campus carry. This is because people's everyday experiences are informed by their positions in multiple dimensions of inequality (Bourdieu 1990; Wood 1995). The focus on social contexts aligns with recent calls for theory and research on legal cynicism to take social context more seriously in understanding how perceptions of police illegitimacy, threat, and failure to protect influence a variety of individual and collective behaviors and attitudes (Boutros 2018).

Most studies of legal cynicism have focused on linking pessimistic cultural views of the law and its enforcers to elevated rates of violence and gun ownership within economically marginalized communities characterized by high crime rates and high proportions of Black and Brown occupants (Black1983; Sierra- Arévalo 2016). More recent studies emphasize the role of context in considering additional outcomes of legal cynicism, including the development of social movements to address problems with the law and its enforcers (Boutros 2018; Hagan, Kaiser and Hanson 2016). My research considers how core components of legal estrangement – experiences with police and legal cynicism – combine with fear of crime on campus to influence support for campus carry among university students differentially situated in hierarchies of race and gender.

There is limited research that uses criminological and intersectional theories to help explain the variation in support for campus carry. Thus, my research contributes to the largely atheoretical literature on student attitudes toward campus carry. I also contribute to theory and research on legal cynicism and legal estrangement by considering how legal cynicism shapes attitudes toward campus carry in the university/college environment, an environment relatively removed from those often considered in studies of legal cynicism. In doing so, I make the case that students who have experiences that make them feel estranged from the law and its enforcers are less likely to view campus carry policies as protective extensions of the law and its enforcers than those whose experiences lead them to view the law and its enforcers as legitimate and protective. Those who feel legally estranged may, in fact, view the presence of guns on campus as a threat to their safety and well-being.

My argument diverges from those focused on how legal cynicism operates in marginalized communities with high crime rates, wherein the need for protection from violent victimization is more pronounced than it is on college campuses (Fox, Nobles and Piquero 2009; Catalano 2005; Fisher and Sloan 2003). I propose that the emphasis on guns as necessary for self and other protection on college campuses is symbolically aligned with the "good guy with a gun" maxim and is not concretely rooted in the types of harsh realities of everyday life that inform views of guns as protective in marginalized communities. In doing so, my research maintains that everyday experiences with law enforcement and safety that are patterned across race and gender remain central for understanding support for symbolic arguments about protection, and by extension guns on campus.

To assess my arguments and provide texture to understandings of support for guns on campus across race and gender, I derive and test a series of hypotheses using original survey data

with close- and open-ended responses from college students at six universities in the southern part of the United States. Using ordinal logistic regression models, I assess specific hypotheses about race differences in experiences with law enforcement, legal cynicism, and fear of crime on students' support for campus carry across gender. Qualitative data from open-ended responses to survey questions allow me to consider more explicitly how race and gender intersect to shape the processes through which experiences with law enforcement, legal cynicism, and fear of crime influence views on campus carry.

The paper proceeds as follows: I begin with an overview of research on campus carry with an emphasis on documented race and gender differences in support for campus carry and in reasons provided for supporting campus carry. In the next section, I discuss the theory of legal estrangement, which can be used to understand how race and gender differences in experiences with law enforcers, beliefs about the legitimacy of the law and its enforcers, and fear of crime influence support for campus carry across intersecting inequalities. Next, I synthesize research on legal cynicism, police interactions, and fear of crime with understandings of support for campus carry to derive hypotheses about how support for campus carry varies across individuals and groups differentially situated in hierarchies of race and gender. In the following section, I describe the survey instrument and analytic strategy I use to assess hypotheses. The paper concludes with discussion of directions for future research and a discussion of policy implications.

### **CAMPUS CARRY: PROTECTION AND CONTEXT**

Research on campus carry focuses primarily on documenting how many students conceal carry on campus, the characteristics of students who conceal carry, and general attitudes toward

concealed carry policies on college campuses. This research finds that the vast majority of college students, nearly 95%, do not carry guns on campus (Jang et al. 2015; Miller, Hemenway, and Wechsler 2002; Miller, Hemenway, and Wechsler 1999), and approximately 80% of students do not support policies that allow guns on college campuses (Patten, Thomas, and Wada 2013a; Brinker 2008). Unsurprisingly, students who own guns are more supportive of campus carry policies than those who do not (Jang et al. 2014; Woolnough 2009; Miller et al. 2002; Presley, Meilman, and Cashin 1997). Support for campus carry is also more pronounced among White students as compared to Black students (Presley et al. 1997; Miller et al. 2002) and among men relative to women (Cavanaugh et al. 2012).

Among the small number of students who report carrying firearms on campus, the main reason provided for doing so is protection (Miller et al. 2002). Moreover, the most prominent advocacy group for allowing guns on campus, The Students for Concealed Carry on Campus (SCCC), maintains on their website that, "Holders of state-issued concealed handgun licenses should be allowed the same measure of personal protection on college campuses that they enjoy virtually everywhere else" (https://concealedcampus.org/). Protection is cited more often as the reason for supporting campus carry among White students and men than among other students (Miller et al. 2002). These findings align with research on guns more generally, which shows protection to be a primary reason people provide for why they carry guns. For instance, research shows that men report being motivated to carry a gun in order to protect the women and children in their lives (Carlson 2015) and to defend themselves against people and places they perceive as dangerous, specifically citing that the presence of Black and Brown men in these spaces as a sign of danger (Stroud 2012).

Despite similarities across college students and the general population in reports of protection as relevant for why people own firearms, research shows that context matters for understanding the degree of comfort people express with concealed carry policies. Specifically, students are more likely to say they feel comfortable with guns in the broader community than they are to say they are comfortable with guns on university and college campuses (Cavanaugh et al. 2012). This suggests that understanding support for campus carry requires specific consideration of the university context. Race is also an important consideration. Black students, for instance, report feeling fearful that allowing guns on campus could expose them to increased surveillance and profiling (Statement by the Department of African and African-American Studies Faculty 2016). Thus, it is important to take into account how race and racialized experiences with social control contextualize support for campus carry.

It is also important to differentiate support for campus carry and actually carrying a gun on campuses that allow campus carry in considerations of the race-gender-gun nexus. A recent study shows that even though Black students are less likely than their White peers to support campus carry, they are more likely to say they would carry a gun if the law permitted guns on campus (Satterfield and Wallace 2020). This may be because Black students consider campus carry policies to be a threat to their safety that requires them to carry a gun despite not wanting to do so. Unpacking this possibility requires consideration of students' direct and vicarious experiences with law enforcement, views of the law and its enforcers, and fear of crime.

### LEGAL ESTRANGEMENT: STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

The theory of legal estrangement can help make sense of interrelations between experiences with police, legal cynicism, fear of crime, and support for campus carry across

intersections of race and gender. The theory emphasizes that structural conditions (including individual and group experiences with law enforcement) and legal cynicism (a cultural orientation of distrust in the law and its enforcers) are intricately related and coalesce to influence the extent to which individuals and groups feel like the law and its enforcers operate to include or exclude them from society (Bell 2017). The law and its enforcers ideally should operate to assure individuals and communities that they are a part of society; however, interactions with law enforcement more often make Black citizens feel estranged from society and the law (Fine et al. 2003; Weitzer and Tuch 2004a; Brunson and Miller 2006a; Gabbidon, Higgins, and Potter 2011). According to the theory of legal estrangement, those who feel estranged from the law believe the law and its enforcers are worth abiding but do not believe the law and its enforcers see them as a part of society or as worthy of protection.

# **Structure: Police Injustice**

Research consistently shows that Black citizens have more unjust encounters with the police than White citizens do. A meta-analysis of quantitative research on the determinants of arrest shows that Black suspects are more likely to be arrested than White suspects even when legal characteristics (severity of the offense, presence of witnesses, and commission of an additional crime during the police encounter) and interactional extra-legal characteristics (demeanor of the suspect) are held constant (Kochel, Wilson, and Mastrofski 2011). Using police camera footage, Voigt et al. (2017) asked research participants to assess how respectful police officers were in their encounters with citizens. Without knowing the race of the citizens, observers consistently assessed the treatment of White citizens as more respectful than the treatment of Black citizens.

More disconcerting is that Black citizens are disproportionately subject to excessive use of force and lethal violence in encounters with police officers (Tomaskovic-Devey and Warren 2009; National Juvenile Justice Network 2017). Indeed, recent statistics show that Black individuals are three times more likely to be killed by police officers as compared to their White counterparts (Mapping Police Violence 2020). Even in situations that do not prove fatal, Black citizens are more likely to report negative experiences with police as compared to other racial-ethnic groups (Fine et al. 2003; Weitzer and Tuch 2004a; Brunson and Miller 2006a; Gabbidon et al. 2011). A majority of young Black adults report either personal experiences of police harassment and violence or experiences of having witnessed police harassment and violence of others (Suddler 2016).

Experiences with the police are informed not only by race but also by gender. Thus, there are both within-race and within-gender distinctions that have to be made to fully understand police-citizen encounters. Black feminist scholars identify racial stereotypes as controlling images that justify the oppression of Black people and shape everyday interactions (Collins 1990; hooks 2000). These images have both a race and a gender, with prevailing images of Black men depicting them as dangerous and criminal (Collins 1990; Russell-Brown 1998). Controlling images of Black women focus on their sexuality, often defining them as promiscuous and overly sexual (Collins 1990, 2004). Controlling images are central to understanding police-citizen encounters as they can be seen as the scaffolding of the implicit and explicit biases police officers bring to interactions with Black citizens.

Consistent with stereotypes of Black men as criminal and dangerous, Black men are more likely than any other race and gender group to be racially profiled, harassed, and physically assaulted by police officers (Lundman and Kaufman 2003; Brunson and Miller 2006b; Brunson

2007; Boyles 2015). Black men are more likely than Black women to be the targets of lethal and nonlethal police force (Voigt et al. 2017). Fifty-nine percent of Black men say they have been unfairly stopped by police officers as compared to 31% of Black women (Desliver, Lipka and Fahmy 2020). Thus, comparisons of police encounters within race show that Black men are at a comparative disadvantage to Black women when considering police use of force. Previous research on police injustice has largely focused on Black men's experiences (Crenshaw 2016).

Like Black men, Black women are at a comparative disadvantage within their gender group. That is, Black women are more likely than women of other racial and ethnic groups to be targeted as suspects by the police (Hitchens, Carr and Clampet-Lundquist 2018; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Gabbidon et al. 2011; Nordberg et al. 2016) and to be the targets of lethal force (Ritchie 2017; Voigt et al. 2017). Black women are also the disproportionate targets of police sexual harassment and misconduct (Hitchens et al. 2018; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Richie 2012) and are more likely to be treated as inferior or as if they are "nasty" or unworthy of police assistance (Rengifo and Pater 2017). The experiences of sexual harassment and of being treated as "nasty" that Black women describe are qualitatively different from those of Black men, whose experiences are more often physically violent and draw on a different set of controlling images (Rengifo and Pater 2017).

Much qualitative and quantitative research has focused on racialized experiences with law enforcement in impoverished and structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods (Jones 2009; Rios 2011; Kochel et al. 2011). However, the research lens – particularly qualitative research – has not focused as much attention on experiences Black, middle class people have with the police across various settings (Weitzer 2000). Some studies document that Black people, regardless of class status, have more negative experiences with and are more often stopped by

police as compared to their White counterparts (Kochel et al. 2011). In affluent White neighborhoods, Black residents are unjust targets of policing because they are perceived to be out of place, and police use the threat of arrest to expel them from White spaces (Soss and Weaver 2017). Notably, even Black residents of Black middle-class communities are comparatively less satisfied with the police than White residents of White middle-class communities (Wu, Sun, and Triplett 2009).

Individuals and communities, of course, can be targets of police injustice not only as suspects but also through their victimization experiences. Residents of marginalized communities report that they are over-policed as suspects and under-policed when they call on law enforcement for protection and assistance (Reisig and Parks 2000; Anderson 1999; Sampson and Bartusch 1998; Rios 2011; Ward 2012; Nadal et al. 2017). As a consequence, community residents are reluctant to call the police for help because they do not believe the police will support them and fear harassment and suspicion from law enforcement (Rengifo, Slocum, and Chillar 2019; Rengifo, Pater, and Velazquez 2017; Carlson 2012; Rios 2011; Jones 2009; Brunson and Miller 2006a).

Victims of crime, especially victims of violent crime, often report they are not satisfied with their experiences with criminal justice actors, including police officers (Walker 2015).

Black citizens, in particular, emphasize that the police take their victimization less seriously than they take White victims and victimization (Yarrow 2005). This results in a lack of respect for police rooted in the belief that police responses to victims are racist. This ultimately renders Black victims hesitant to call on the police for protection and support (Yarrow 2005<sup>1</sup>). Victims'

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Even with legal estrangement and legal cynicism, Black citizens and disadvantaged communities still find individual ways to believe they can rely on and trust some police officers in specific situations (Miller 2008; Bell 2016; Duck 2017; Schaible and Hughes 2012).

experiences with the police also have explicitly gendered overtones, particularly in cases of sexual victimization. Women who are victims of sexual assault report feeling like the police do not treat them as credible victims, blaming them for their victimization (Maier 2008; Patterson 2011). Reports of such feelings are particularly pronounced among Black women, whose sexual victimization experiences are treated with even less urgency in the criminal justice system than those of White women (Carbone-Lopez, Slocum and Kruttschnitt 2016). When police officers have disbelieving reactions and engage in victim-blaming, which is a well-known response to women's sexual victimization, women learn they cannot rely on the criminal justice system in times of need (Campbell 2005; Campbell and Raja 2005; Patterson 2011).

## **Culture: Legal Cynicism**

Given the negative experiences Black citizens have with police officers both as suspects and victims, it is unsurprising that they report negative attitudes toward the police and do not believe that the police can be relied upon to protect and serve their needs (Brunson and Miller 2006b; Carr, Napolitano, and Keating 2007; Sharp and Atherton 2007; Weitzer and Tuch 2004b). That is, unjust experiences with law enforcement have led to the pervasive belief in Black communities that Black citizens are treated less fairly and with less respect in the criminal justice system than are White citizens (Menasce-Horowitz, Brown, and Cox, 2019). The extent to which people perceive that they can rely on the police is part of a larger orientation toward the law and its enforcers, encompassed in the concept of legal cynicism. Legal cynicism is "a cultural orientation in which the law and the agents of its enforcement, such as police and courts, are viewed as illegitimate, unresponsive, and ill equipped to ensure public safety" (Kirk and Papachristos, 2011:1191).

Given research on police-citizen encounters, it is unsurprising that Black citizens report higher levels of legal cynicism than other citizens. Indeed, research consistently shows that the roots of legal cynicism are found in personal and vicarious experiences with law enforcers (Hitchens et al. 2018; Bundy 2019; Kirk and Papachristos 2015). These experiences include personal encounters with justice system actors, witnessing and hearing about other people's encounters with the justice system, and collective memories of the criminal justice system that provide an interpretive framework for understanding personal and vicarious experiences with the law and its enforcers (Hitchens et al. 2018; Bundy 2019; Kirk and Papachristos 2015). Modern day complaints about police misconduct in Black communities thereby find their roots in contemporary experiences as well as in community memories of police malfeasance dating far back in American history (McCarthy, Hagan, and Herda 2020).

As a consequence of systemically patterned experiences with police injustice, people's positions in race and gender hierarchies shape the extent to which they feel cynical toward the law and its enforcers. Black individuals report more legal cynicism than White or Hispanic individuals do (Boyles 2015; Carr et al. 2007; Weitzer and Tuch 2002). Women are less cynical of law enforcement than are men, but race differences within gender show that young Black and Latina women report higher levels of legal cynicism than White women (Hitchens et al. 2018; Ritchie 2017). Similarly, race differences in legal cynicism hold across social class. That is, Black middle-class individuals report more legal cynicism than do similarly situated White and Hispanic individuals (Boyles 2015; Feagin 1991; Weitzer and Tuch 2002). Black individuals residing in economically marginalized communities report higher rates of cynicism than their middle-class peers (Wu et al. 2019). Thus, within race differences can be understood partially as a byproduct of community dynamics (Anderson 1999; Goffman 2009; Reisig and Parks 2000).

The bulk of research on legal cynicism, particularly qualitative studies, has been conducted in marginalized communities characterized by high crime rates and high proportions of Black occupants. In these communities, residents experience over-policing as suspects and under-policing in times of need (Anderson 1999; Venkatesh 2009; Jones 2009), which breeds a lack of trust in the law and its enforcers (Sharp and Atherton 2007; Kerrison, Cobbina, and Bender 2018). As a result, young Black and Brown men in marginalized communities carry guns to protect themselves and their reputations as a matter of life and death. Indeed, quantitative studies report links between legal cynicism, gun ownership, and the use of violence (Sierra-Arévalo 2016; Watkins, Huebner, and Decker 2008; Smith and Uchida 1988; Black 1983). Although young women in marginalized communities are skeptical of the police and their willingness to protect them from violence and victimization (Jones 2009), they are much less likely to carry guns than marginalized young men because they are aware that a gun wielded for protection can be used against them (Miller 1998, 2008). Thus, links between police injustice, legal cynicism, and concealed carry are informed not only by race and place but also by gender.

Of course, carrying weapons for protection in marginalized communities is not the same as supporting concealed carry laws on a college campus. Even though the campus community does not experience high rates of lethal crime, experiences with community law enforcement and campus police likely influence students' attitudes toward guns and campus carry. Most research on legal cynicism to date has focused on the experiences of racial minorities in marginalized communities where legal cynicism is a precursor to gun possession. More recent research shows that legal cynicism is a precursor to social movements aimed at reforming law and society in other contexts (McCarthy et al. 2020; Boutros 2018). This highlights the need for more theory and research on how different social contexts inform varying responses to legal cynicism. In

response to this need, I focus on the university context and the effect of legal cynicism on support for guns on campus. That is, I explore how lived and vicarious experiences with law enforcement among university students influence legal cynicism, fear of crime, and ultimately attitudes toward campus carry.

### **Culture: Fear of Crime**

Protection and safety are commonly cited reasons for supporting campus carry (Shepperd et al. 2018; Miller et al. 2002) and are core components of feeling like one is part of society and the law (Bell 2017). Those who feel unprotected or like they are not considered worthy of protection by the law are more likely to fear crime (Ho and McKean 2004; Lane and Fox 2020; Ortega and Myles 1987). As such, fear of crime on campus is a necessary consideration for understanding connections between the intersection of race and gender and campus carry attitudes. Research on fear of crime shows that intersecting inequalities and perceptions of the police as willing and able to provide protection influence the extent to which people feel fearful of criminal victimization (Alper and Chappell 2012).

Fear of crime on college/university campuses is informed by race. College campuses are predominately White spaces in which White students feel more protected from harassment and mistreatment than Black students do (Cole and Arriola 2016). Black students, in particular, report feeling less safe on campus than students of other racial and ethnic groups and are more likely to consider the campus climate to be uninviting, hostile, and inequitable (Mwangi et al. 2018; Rankin and Reason 2005; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003). Notably, Black students report experiencing racism in nearly all campus spaces, including in residence halls (Haynes 2019; Harwood et al. 2012), classrooms (Warner 2018; Boysen 2012), athletic involvements (Cooper

and Hall 2016; Melendez 2008), and with campus police (Thomas and Russel 2019). Black students ultimately face the added fear of becoming targets of hate crimes and racialized incidents on campus (Garibay et al. 2018; Stotzer and Hossellman 2012). Along with feeling less safe on campus than their peers, Black students report feeling socially isolated from the college/university community, which can be viewed as a form of institutional estrangement relevant to feelings of safety and belonging (Yosso et al. 2009).

Fear of crime is informed also by gender. Women report elevated fear of crime as compared to men even though men are more likely to be victims of most crimes (Ditton and Farrall 2000; Lee 2007). This paradox can be explained in part by considering the shadow of sexual assault that accompanies women's assessments of personal safety and fear (Mellgren and Ivert 2018; Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeny 2006; Stanko 1995). Considerations of fear of crime within gender show that Black women are more fearful of crime than are White women, which is consistent with the fact that Black women are at elevated risk of victimization, including sexual victimization, as compared to White women (Goodrum et al. 2019). Black women's lived and vicarious experiences as victims of crime, thus, help explain why they report more fear of crime than White women (Watson et al. 2015).

Experiences with the law and police also play into feelings of fear and safety (Abbott, McGrath, and May 2020; Ho and McKean 2004; Lytle and Randa 2015) and can contribute to understanding race and gender differences in fear of crime. In particular, citizens who are not satisfied with the police and those who feel estranged from the law are more likely to report elevated fear of crime (Lytle and Randa 2015; Ho and McKean 2004; Lane and Fox 2020; Ortega and Myles 1987). Indeed, college students who believe the police lack the ability to problem-solve and protect the campus community report being more fearful of crime on campus

(Ho and McKean 2004). Ultimately, patterns of fear of crime across gender and race can be explained in part by the patterns of legal estrangement and dissatisfaction with the police discussed throughout.

Although fear of crime and the need for protection are often associated with concealed carrying (Stroebe, Leander, and Kruglanski 2017; Sierra-Arévalo 2016; Bankston et al. 1990), it is important to consider that race and gender impose nuances into considerations of protection, fear, and support for guns on campus. Quantitative research shows that women who own guns are more likely than men who own guns to report protection as the main reason for gun ownership (Wolfson, Azrael, and Miller 2020; Wolfson, Azrael, and Miller 2020). However, qualitative work reveals that women express concerns that a gun wielded for protection might be used against them (Miller 2008), which is also a concern among Black men but for different reasons. Qualitative studies reveal that White men who discuss the importance of guns for protecting their families describe imagined dangers focused on fears about Black criminals (Stroud 2012). Consistent with this, Metzl (2019:35) concludes from his research that, "Mainstream society reflexively codes white men carrying weapons in public as patriots, while marking armed Black men as threats or criminals." This aligns with theoretical work on controlling images of Black men (Collins 1990; hooks 2000), particularly the controlling image of the criminal Black man (Russell-Brown 1998). It is unsurprising that Black students, particularly Black men, report concerns that campus carry policies could make them more unsafe, as they might become even more pronounced targets of surveillance and control than they already are (Statement by the Department of African and African-American Studies Faculty 2016).

Overall, fear of crime – like legal cynicism – can be considered a cultural component of legal estrangement. This is because citizens who feel disconnected from the law and its protective function are not only cynical of the justice system but are also made to feel fearful of crime since they do not see themselves as legitimate targets of protection and security in the eyes of the law and its enforcers (Abbott et al. 2020; Lane and Fox 2020; Lytle and Randa 2015; Ho and McKean 2004; Ortega and Myles 1987). Thus, I propose that like legal cynicism, fear of crime informs attitudes toward campus carry and will help explain why Black students may be less likely than their White peers to support campus carry. Again, I flip the script to maintain that fear of crime in the college context is unlikely to result in increased support for campus carry, but is instead likely to reduce support for campus carry, particularly for Black students and to some extent, women.

### SYNTHESIS AND HYPOTHESES

I use the theory of legal estrangement to consider the extent to which police injustice, legal cynicism, and fear of crime explain race differences in support for campus carry across gender. In doing so, I focus on the college/university environment as a novel context in which to consider how legal estrangement informs attitudes toward policies that support campus carry. My theoretical model proposes that personal and vicarious experiences with law enforcement, legal cynicism, and fear of crime influence support for campus carry across gender and help explain race differences in the extent to which students support campus carry. My general argument is that individuals whose life experiences make them feel like they are part of the law – predominantly White men – are more likely to view themselves as extensions of law enforcement (i.e., as citizen protectors who should have guns) than those who feel estranged

from the law and its enforcers. Those who feel estranged from the law – as informed by intersections of race and gender – are more likely to harbor concerns that members of the campus community who view themselves as citizen protectors will add to their experiences of injustice on campus if these community members are allowed to conceal carry on campus.

Since Black students are more likely to feel estranged from the law and are more likely to fear crime on campus, my models predict that Black students are less likely to support campus carry. They are unlikely to view themselves as legitimate extensions of the legal apparatus and are likely to have concerns that more guns on campus will be linked to more experiences of racialized injustice and victimization. White students, who have fewer unjust personal and vicarious experiences with the police and thereby have the privilege of believing in the system and in their personal safety and protection, will be more likely than Black students to support campus carry. This is because they are more likely to see themselves as part of the system and as potential extensions of the legal apparatus as citizen protectors. As such, I posit the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1*: Black students will be less likely to support campus carry than White students.

I use qualitative responses to questions asking students to provide reasons for supporting or not supporting campus carry to add context and understanding to race differences across gender in support for campus carry. I also, of course, assess core hypotheses from my legal estrangement model to consider the roles of police injustice, legal cynicism, and fear of crime in explaining how race informs support for campus carry across gender.

Legal estrangement, or feeling like one is not part of the law, comprises both a structural component rooted in experiences of injustice with the police and cultural components focused on

the extent to which people feel cynical toward the law and its enforcers and how safe from crime people feel in their everyday environments. A vast body of research on police experiences, legal cynicism, and feelings of safety shows that Black citizens are at a marked disadvantage when compared to White citizens with respect to just treatment, feelings of trust in the law and its enforcers, and feelings of protection and safety.

Black women and Black men experience more police injustice than their White counterparts (Kochel et al. 2011). Black men are disproportionate targets of injustice in the criminal justice system, particularly physical violence, on account of controlling images that depict them as dangerous, criminal, and in need of control (Rengifo and Pater 2017). Black women are disproportionately targets of police sexual harassment and violence as compared to White women (Hitchens et al. 2017; Ritchie 2017). Experiences of police injustice, whether personal or vicarious experiences of family and community members, are the core structural component of legal estrangement or feelings of detachment from the law and society. I propose that unjust experiences with law enforcement decrease support for campus carry because Black students may view themselves as potential targets of profiling and racism among peers who see themselves as citizen protectors. This process is likely most pronounced among Black men because controlling images of Black men squarely highlight them as dangerous criminals in need of control. I posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (legal estrangement - structural): Experiences of police injustice decrease support for campus carry and reduce the total effect of Black race relative to White race on support for campus carry among men and women.

There are also cultural components of legal estrangement, including the well-founded belief that the law and its enforcers are illegitimate and that the law and its enforcers are

unwilling or unable to provide protection and support (Bell 2016). Black individuals report higher levels of legal cynicism than White or Hispanic people do, and these race differences hold across gender (Boyles 2015; Carr et al. 2007). I propose that legal cynicism decreases support for campus carry because White students, who are more likely than Black students to believe in the legitimacy of the law, are more likely to view themselves as extensions of law enforcement who can better play their part with guns. Black students are unlikely to view themselves as an extension of a system that they are made to feel estranged or separated from on account of the system treating them as suspect and in need of control (Bell 2017; Collins 2004). In short, those who feel like part of the system of protection and justice, predominately White students, are more likely to support the arming of citizens to expand the system than those who feel estranged from the system. I posit the following:

Hypothesis 3 (legal estrangement - cultural): Legal cynicism decreases support for campus carry and reduces the total effect of Black race relative to White race on support for campus carry among both men and women.

Legal cynicism, or the belief that the police are not there to protect and serve and indeed may pose a threat, feeds directly into fear of crime and perceptions of safety. Although fear of crime is most often linked to support for policies allowing citizens to protect themselves with guns (Hassett et al., 2020), my legal estrangement model offers that Black students' fear of crime will *reduce* support for campus carry. This is because their fear may represent not only fear of potential offenders but also fears of so-called citizen protectors, which are bolstered by their unjust experiences with the police and with racialized mistreatment on campus. Black students report experiences with mistreatment, harassment, and victimization based on both their gender

and their race (Garibay et al. 2018; Cole and Arriola 2016; Stotzer and Hossellman 2012). I posit the following:

Hypothesis 4 (legal estrangement - cultural): Fear of crime on campus decreases support for campus carry and reduces the total effect of Black race relative to White race on support for campus carry among both men and women.

Overall, my model of legal estrangement and support for campus carry focuses on understanding race differences in support for campus carry. This model takes into consideration that students' lived and vicarious experiences with the criminal justice system, their belief in the system, and their fear of crime can help explain differences in support for campus carry. In doing so, the model explicates the race gap in support for campus carry across gender groups. The general argument is that students who are more privileged in relation to the law, justice, and protection may be more likely to view themselves as protective extensions of the law. Those who are estranged from the law are more likely to believe that guns on campus will not serve a protective function for them but will instead place them in more danger by widening the net of actors with guns who might use those guns against them and/or view them as suspicious or threatening.

## DATA, MEASUREMENT, AND METHODS

### Data

Assessing my hypotheses requires data from college students on their experiences with the police, legal cynicism, fear of crime, and attitudes toward campus carry. Such data are not readily available, requiring the collection of original data. I collected data from students at six southern universities using a web-based survey with both closed- and open-ended questions. The

sample comprises undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in six southeastern universities across two states between September 2019 and November 2019. Half of the universities are in a state that has a policy allowing college students to conceal carry firearms on campus, and the other half are in a state without such a policy.

To select the sample, I received rosters and email addresses of the student population at each university. I randomly sampled 10% of the student population at five of the universities. I used a stratified random sampling technique in which I oversampled Black students at the sixth university, which had significantly fewer Black students than the other universities. Appendix A provides demographic information on the universities as well as the breakdown of these same core demographics in the sample data. A total of 19,908 students were contacted via email to complete the web-based survey in September through October 2019.<sup>2</sup> Of these students, 3,866 students completed the survey. The response rate of 19.42%<sup>3</sup> exceeds the average response rate of 11% for web-based surveys (Manfreda et al. 2008), consistent with prior research suggesting that college student populations are more responsive to web-based surveys than other populations. Appendix A shows that the gender and race breakdowns of the study sample align with university population data, showing that patterns of nonparticipation were not informed by race or gender. Individuals who did not respond to the campus carry question or demographic information questions were not included in the analyses, rendering an analytic sample of 2,929 students.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> To reduce nonparticipation, students who did not complete the survey were sent four follow-up emails over the course of four weeks. The first follow-up email was sent four days after the survey invitation was sent, the second follow-up email was sent one week after that, the third follow-up was sent six days after that, and the fourth follow-up was sent four days after that. Each follow-up email included the survey link asking them to participate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Response rates varied across the sampled universities ranging from 10% to 23%. Response rates for universities that allow campus carry were 19.12%, and response rates for universities that do not allow campus carry were 19.91%.

### **Measures**

My substantive model of legal estrangement and support for campus carry is diagrammed in Figure 1. The first block of variables includes the race and the control variables. Race is coded as White, Black, Asian, and Other race from respondents' self-reports of their race. Consistent with the bulk of theoretical work on race and legal estrangement, I focus my theoretical and empirical lens on comparisons of Black and White students, treating the additional race categories as control variables. I include additional controls for age, having been raised in an impoverished community, having been raised in a rural community, and campus concealed carry policy. Age is a binary variable, coded as 0 if the respondent is 20 or younger and 1 if the respondent is 21 and older. I use 21 as the cut-off age because federal law requires individuals to be 21 to purchase a handgun (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2015). The poverty status of the community in which the respondent was raised is coded as 1 if the respondent reported that their childhood neighborhood could best be described as impoverished and 0 otherwise. Rural residence is coded 1 if the student reported having been raised in a rural community and 0 if the student reported their community to have been urban or suburban. Campus carry policy is coded as 1 if the student attends a university that allows campus carry and 0 if the student attends a university that does not allow campus carry.

The next block of variables includes the legal estrangement variables: police injustice, legal cynicism, and fear of crime. I capture police injustice with a summary scale comprising four items: feeling discriminated against by the police, believing the police target racial/ethnic minorities, perceptions that law-abiding friends and family have been targeted by the police, and the belief that police target immigrants ( $\alpha$ =.85). Values for each item range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Legal cynicism is a 5-item summary scale of students' reports of

the extent to which they agree with statements (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) capturing beliefs that the police have too much power, police deserve respect (coded 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree), police do not prevent crime, police cause problems, and police presence makes them feel safe (coded 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) ( $\alpha = .88$ ). My final legal estrangement variable, fear of crime, is a 3-item summary scale including student reports on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) that they worry about their own safety on campus, they avoid walking alone at night on campus, and they are afraid of crime occurring on campus ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

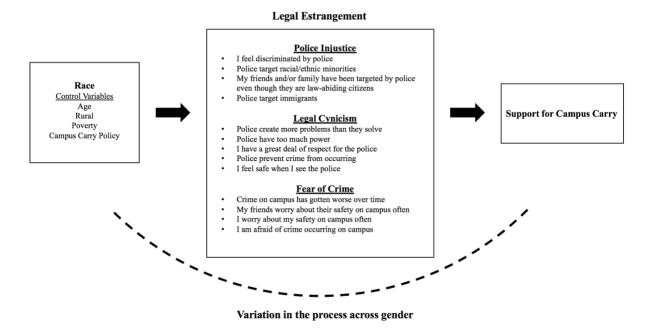


Figure 1. Substantive Model of Legal Estrangement and Support for Campus Carry.

The dependent variable is an ordinal variable capturing support for campus carry that asks students whether they favor or oppose a policy allowing students to conceal carry guns on campus. Responses range from 1 (strongly oppose) to 5 (strongly favor). I supplement the reported quantitative analyses with students' open-ended responses to a follow-up question

asking them to describe in 1-2 sentences why they favor or oppose policies that allow concealed carry on campus. All models are estimated separately for men and women, as the hypotheses articulate variations in how race influences support for campus carry across men and women.

## **Analytic Strategy**

I estimate a series of ordinal logistic regression models separately for men and women to assess the effect of race differences between Black and White students on support for campus carry with and without the legal estrangement variables included in the model. I estimate the models separately for men and women and use z-tests of differences in coefficients across groups to assess whether the race effect is more pronounced among men than women (Paternoster et al. 1998). In the first model, I regress support for campus carry on race and the control variables for men and for women. These models provide the total effect of Black race as compared to White race on support for campus carry for men and women. In a second set of models, I include the legal estrangement variables – police injustice, legal cynicism, and fear of crime – to test the mediation arguments articulated in hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. To assess mediation, I use the criteria that there is a significant total effect of race on support for campus carry, this total effect is reduced with the inclusion of legal cynicism variables in the model (i.e., the direct effect is smaller than the total effect), and the indirect effect of Black race on support for campus carry is statistically significant. I obtain indirect effects and standard errors using STATA's GSEM command wherein I specify the outcome variable as ordinal and the mediating variables as continuous. To analyze the open-ended responses, I coded instances in which students discussed themes that aligned with legal estrangement. The open-ended comments provide supplemental

information to help make sense of the complexity of the intersection of race and gender, legal estrangement, and support for campus carry.

# **RESULTS**

Table 1 presents the unstandardized total and direct effects of race and the legal estrangement variables on support for campus carry among men and women.

Table 1. Unstandardized Total and Direct Effects on Support for Campus Carry Across Gender

	Men		Women		
	Total Effect (1)	Direct Effect (2)	Total Effect (3)	Direct Effect (4)	
1. Black	-1.076 ***a	022 <sup>a</sup>	596 ***	.539 ***	
	(.195)	(.212)	(.137)	(.156)	
2. Asian	-1.287 ***	-1.052 ***	854 ***	728 ***	
	(.199)	(.208)	(.193)	(.204)	
3. Other Race	-1.408 ***a	-1.130 ***a	833 ***	622 ***	
	(.188)	(.197)	(.189)	(.208)	
4. Rural	.620 ***	.399 ***	.820***	.622 ***	
	(.119)	(.123)	(.109)	(.113)	
5. Age	.095	.166	.079	.018	
	(.101)	(.104)	(.093)	(.097)	
6. Poverty	772 **	.070	139	.293	
	(.338)	(.339)	(.288)	(.310)	
7. Campus Carry	.604 ***a	.583 ***	.966 ***	.842 ***	
Policy	(.104)	(.110)	(.098)	(.103)	
8. Police Injustice	-	-1.101 *** (.088)	-	906 *** (.084)	
9. Legal Cynicism	-	.020 <sup>a</sup> (.086)	-	479 *** (.090)	
10. Fear of Crime	-	157 *** (.057)	-	213 *** (.052)	

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

<sup>\*</sup>p<.1. \*\*p<.05. \*\*\* p<.01 a Significant difference across gender (p<.05)

Black students, Asian students, and students who report their race to be other than White, Black, or Asian are less likely to support campus carry than are their White peers (rows 1, 2, 3, columns 1 and 3). When focusing on distinctions between Black students and White students, *hypothesis I* is supported in that Black men are less likely than White men to support campus carry, and Black women are less likely than White women to support campus carry. The effect of being Black is statistically more pronounced among men than it is among women (t=-2.014). Openended responses to a question asking the reasons for supporting or not supporting campus carry suggest that the pronounced effect of Black racial status within gender for men is a result of how young men view themselves in relation to guns in the campus community. White men consistently view themselves as citizen protectors whereas Black men are more likely to express fear of White students carrying guns on campus. The citizen protector theme was central to many White men's discussions, stating:

"I have a concealed carry permit, and I carry everywhere I go as a means to protect myself and my family..."

"I would favor the policy, because there are bad people in this world that wish to do harm to others. The only way to combat these people is with a good guy on the other side of a gun. Legally carrying individuals are not out looking to harm innocent individuals, only wish to protect themselves and those around them."

"I feel more protected with carrying my gun in places that are heavily populated and can attract terrorists/mass shooters. If I have my gun when a situation like that happens then I will be able to help stop it."

Despite the fact that White men view having guns as important for them to be protectors of their community, Black men do not share the view that guns in the hands of

citizens is protective. Instead, Black men express concern and fear about students carrying guns, stating:

"I think with the current racial tensions in [the] US this would be a bad decision. Racial and ethnic minorities experience gun culture differently than their white counterparts. I think the idea of allowing guns on campus is a white value that discredits the experience of marginalized groups who have been victimized by them."

"The way life is for Black people on campus is already tough. We have strikes on our back because of our skin, so this makes it easier for the people on campus who don't like us, to kill us quick."

The fact that race has a stronger influence on support for campus carry among men than among women appears to be the result of White women expressing contradictory thoughts on the privilege of protection and fears of harm in contexts where guns are allowed. On one hand, several White women expressed the need to be able to protect themselves from sexual victimization as well as the need to be protected from campus shooters, stating:

"I would favor the policy because I, as a woman, feel as though it would keep me protected. If a violent situation arose, I could use it to defend myself or protect others around me."

"I would favor the above policy because it would allow students to have the option to protect themselves. I feel this way especially strongly due to the several emails I have received regarding sexual harassment on campus. I think if more victims had the option to be armed in these scenarios then they would have a better opportunity to defend themselves against an attacker."

On the other hand, White women express concern that guns will promote more violence and increase power differences on campus, stating:

"Carrying guns on campus will encourage more violence and will inflict fear."

"In my experience, the youthful age of attendees and high stress environment of a college campus creates an unstable enough atmosphere without adding sources of personal power and easy destruction. The (lack of) self control exhibited by incidence of rape, alcohol abuse, and eating disorders should be enough to prove this highly volatile population doesn't need easy and quick access to guns."

Black women did not discuss the privilege of protection seen in White women's responses. Instead, their responses focused primarily on threats posed by guns. Black women's responses had an emphasis not only on physical safety, but also having their voices restricted through threats to their physical well-being. Their concerns are articulated as follows:

"I aint tryna die."

"... it would create an unsafe atmosphere for people of color that attend the university as well as make it easier to restrict people's voices on certain topics in fear of being shot."

"... our families send us away to further our education, not for us to fight for our lives."

"I oppose this policy because I am black. I don't care if skin color is not an issue. It's been an issue for the past 300 years, and I don't want to be shot because of my skin color."

The explanations White and Black students offer for their support or lack thereof for campus carry align with theoretical arguments about legal estrangement wherein White men are more likely to see themselves as legitimate extensions of the law as protective agents with guns, and some White women see themselves as benefactors of this protection. Unlike White students,

Black students focus on the fact that they would be unlikely to benefit from "protectors" with guns, and instead face the threat of becoming unjust targets of the self-proclaimed protectors. Black students also expressed fear that their lives would be in danger if campus carry was permitted.

## **Legal Estrangement: Police Injustice**

The inclusion of the legal estrangement variables in the regression models bear out these arguments. When the legal estrangement variables – personal and vicarious experiences of police injustice, legal cynicism, and fear of crime – are included in the regression models, the effect of Black race is reduced to non-significance for men (Table 1, compare row 1, column 1 and 2) and becomes positive for women (Table 1, compare row 1, column 3 and 4). This indicates that the legal estrangement variables help explain the total effect of race differences between Black and White students on campus carry views.

Consistent with *hypothesis* 2, personal and vicarious experiences of police injustice reduce support for campus carry among both men (Table 1, row 8, column 2) and women (Table 1, row 8, column 4). Table 2 presents indirect effects and shows that experiences of police injustice play a significant part in explaining why Black men are less likely to support campus carry than White men (row 1, column 1) and why Black women are less likely to support campus carry than White women (row 1, column 2). The indirect effect of Black race on support for campus carry through police injustice is statistically significant across gender (t=-1.893), showing that police injustice plays a more important role in explaining differences across race in support for campus carry for men than for women. Police injustice may feel more pressing to Black men because they are more likely to be subject to excessive use of force and lethal violence at the hands of police (Mapping Police Violence 2020;), which is not to say that Black

women are immune from lethal forms of police injustice on account of race (see Crenshaw 2016; Ritchie 2017). Overall, *hypothesis* 2 is supported in that police injustice helps explain the race differences in support for campus carry among both men and women.

Table 2. Indirect Effects of Race on Support for Campus Carry through Legal Estrangement Variables

	Men (1)	Women (2)
1. Black (+) $\rightarrow$ police injustice (-) $\rightarrow$ gun support	574 *** <sup>a</sup> (.089)	376 *** (.055)
2. Black (+) → legal cynicism (-)→ gun support	001 (.002)	038 * (.023)
3. Black $(+/-4)$ $\rightarrow$ fear of crime $(-)$ $\rightarrow$ gun support	027 <sup>a</sup> (.019)	.060 *** (.021)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

Qualitative responses provide texture to understanding how police injustice proves relevant for tampering support for campus carry among Black students. Discussions of police injustice were not a central feature of White students' responses, though they were a focus in Black students' responses. Black men's discussions of why they do not support campus carry invoke both past and anticipated experiences of police injustice, stating:

"... [I] already gotta dodge cops trying to kill me for no reason, now I gotta worry about white kids shooting me up too? [Shake my head]."

"I would oppose a policy allowing concealed carry on campus because it opens the possibilities for mass shootings, or officers to shoot students because they assumed the student had a gun."

<sup>\*</sup>p<.1. \*\*p<.05. \*\*\* p<.01 a Significant difference across gender (p<.05)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The path for men is Black (+)  $\rightarrow$  fear of crime (-)  $\rightarrow$  gun support. The path for women is Black (-)  $\rightarrow$  fear of crime  $\rightarrow$  (-) gun support.

"Gun violence has gone up steadily over the years, most suicides and homicides involve guns, police brutality is on the rise and since "you know who" is in office, homophobes, xenophobes, bigots, and all the other troglodytes are coming out of their caves... Owning a gun is not a right, like education is not a privilege, in fact those should be reversed."

While experiences of police injustice are important for understanding why Black women are less likely to support campus carry than White women, injustice experiences prove more potent for explicating the Black-White race gap in support for campus carry among men than among women. Through the open-ended comments, it appears that this could be because Black men have more concerns for personal safety, consistent with research showing they are the most likely targets of lethal violence at the hands of justice system actors (Mapping Police Violence 20207). Black women were more likely to discuss concerns in a broader fashion, focusing on concerns for the Black community, stating:

"I would strongly oppose this policy because it isn't the guns that protect and kill people, it is the certain people who are given the opportunity to decide doing these things. I wouldn't feel safe knowing that some people carry guns or own ones on campus. I would feel like this would give more cops the opportunity to shoot innocent people."

"You don't want to be waving a gun around because the on campus police may take action and kill a student. Just saying."

"[This would] increase tensions between police and racial minorities."

"The climate of this country's relationship with people of color, would only turn this policy into a nightmare."

## **Legal Estrangement: Legal Cynicism**

Experiences with police injustice often feed into legal cynicism, or the belief that the legal system and actors within the system cannot be relied upon for protection, and may indeed be a source of threat (Hitchens et al. 2018; Bundy 2019; Kirk and Papachristos 2015). Consistent with *hypothesis 3*, legal cynicism reduces support for campus carry among women (Table 1, row 9, column 4). This hypothesis is not supported among men for whom legal cynicism proves impotent in predicting support for campus carry. The effect of legal cynicism on support for campus carry is significantly different across gender (t=4.009), showing that distrust in the law and legal apparatus is more relevant in women's considerations of support for campus carry than it is in men's considerations. Consistent with *hypothesis 3*, Table 2 presents indirect effects and shows that legal cynicism plays a significant part in explaining race differences between Black and White women in their support for campus carry (row 2, column 2).

Notably, legal cynicism does not help explain why Black men are less likely than their White peers to support campus carry. That legal cynicism proves more important for explaining differences in support for campus carry across Black and White women than across Black and White men could be a result of how immediately pressing personal experiences with police injustice are to Black men as well as the disproportionate attention centered on Black men's experiences of police injustice as compared to Black women's (see Crenshaw 2016; Ritchie 2017; Gonzalez 2019). In addition, the strong Black woman archetype, fraught with contradictions for Black women, encourages them to put community before self, which may help explain their broader emphasis on community well-being (see hooks 2000; Walker-Barnes 2014). Qualitative remarks highlight the relevance of legal cynicism in Black women's

suppressed support for campus carry. Black women emphasize that they have little faith in campus police but even less faith in potentially armed students, stating:

"I want to feel comfortable and safe in my learning environment. While I might trust trained campus police officers, I do not trust my peers to carry weapons around campus and in classrooms responsibly."

"School is supposed to be a safe place. If people other than the security or police [are] carrying guns I would be even more scared to go to school."

"If we don't have guns then police won't need them either."

"I barely trust my peers to work on a group project together, [I] definitely [do] not [trust them] to carry a gun."

"I feel like some people might take advantage of that and harm someone. Like I know for my campus, most people are law enforcement majors and have [their concealed carry] license, but I feel like one day that might [go] wrong."

## **Legal Estrangement: Fear of Crime**

Legal cynicism is relevant to fear of crime in that individuals and groups who feel they cannot rely on the police for protection are likely to feel less safe in their communities.

Consistent with *hypothesis 4*, fear of crime reduces support for campus carry among men (Table 1, row 10, column 2) and women (Table 1, row 10, column 4). Table 2 presents indirect effects and shows that the indirect effect of race on support for campus carry through fear of crime is significant for women, but it is not in the expected direction on account of White women expressing more fear of crime than Black women (Table 2, row 3, column 2). Although fear of crime suppresses support for campus carry among men and women, there was a contradictory

emphasis on guns as protective in White men's open-ended responses to questions about support for campus carry, suggesting that some of the emphasis on serving as citizen protectors is, indeed, more symbolic than concretely pressing in college/university environments, stating:

"I do not want to be a victim. The only thing dangerous individuals fear is an armed victim."

"I would favor a policy that supports concealed carry permit holders to carry guns on campus because one, it is the second amendment, and two, I fear my own safety." "Because in the event of a crime (whether it be a simple robbery or a full on shooting) even just the knowledge of a law abiding person armed with a firearm being nearby would more likely deter a criminal from committing such acts. And if they still occur then that same law abiding citizen could better stop the criminal and protect others through either scaring him off or incapacitating him."

Unlike White men, Black men did not indicate a gun would alleviate their fear of crime. Black men's fear of crime is qualitatively distinct from White men's fear of crime. When Black men discussed their fear of crime on campus, their responses more readily match the quantitative findings. Black men emphasized that campus carry would only exacerbate their fear and create a more unsafe environment on campus, stating:

"Guns don't make people safer."

"Guns are weapons for killing, not for protection."

"I don't believe there is a direct correlation with the increase of guns [and] an increase of safety."

"I would feel less safe if [the] campus allowed concealed carry. I think this fosters a militarized/aggressive context for education, whereas student safety would not be improved."

"To allow students to carry weapons creates a community of fear and anxiety"

"The reality is that it would cause more harm, whether tangible or not, than good to
those who are non-carriers."

The role fear of crime plays in linking race to support for campus carry among women is counter to expectations. Although fear of crime suppresses support for campus carry among women, White women are more likely than Black women to report fearing crime on campus.

When White women discuss fear of crime, the emphasis is on sex offenses, stating:

"I do not have the means to stop an attacker by physical force, I am just not strong enough. I do not want to be in a situation where I appear an easy target because I am on the weaker side. I would prefer that someone thinks twice before trying to rob/assault/ or rape me."

"[Campus carry] also will reduce fears on campus pertaining to sexual threats (including the increased sex trafficking scams in the area)"

"As an 18 year old female, knowing how dangerous an open college campus is, like [redacted], after hours. Many female students are sexually assaulted and feel the need to protect themselves."

"[Campus carry] would allow students to have the option to protect themselves. I feel this way especially strongly due to the several emails I have received regarding sexual harassment on campus.

Although Black women report less fear of crime on campus than White women, Black women's fear of crime is qualitatively distinct from White women's fear. Black women did not emphasize sex offenses in their open-ended comments, focusing instead on fear of hate crimes or of being targeted because of their race. These fears are expressed as follows:

"We do run the risk of more hate crimes.... I am honestly scared of people shooting up minority composed events."

"It's unnecessary and would add fear into many minorities."

"Lack of safety for racial and ethnic minorities as well as LBGTQAI individuals."

"I do not feel it would be a good idea as those with violent tendencies or a wish to harm others would be able to do so. I also believe minorities and people of color would suffer."

"I understand that individuals want to feel safe, but carrying a gun is not the way to go about that."

"I would oppose because I feel like the policy would make the crime rate increase tremendously."

The overall picture from my findings is that legal estrangement is important for understanding support for campus carry, though there are significant differences across gender in the components of legal estrangement that matter most. Among men, experiences of police injustice suppress support for campus carry. Women's level of support for campus carry is informed more broadly by experiences of injustice, legal cynicism, and fear of crime. The only significant difference across men and women is in the role legal cynicism plays in suppressing support for campus carry. Commentary offered by men and women suggest that men may be more concerned with their personal welfare and experiences; whereas, women express more concern about the community writ large, which may well capture the distinction between experiences of injustice versus attitudinal views of the justice system captured by legal cynicism.

My findings also show that legal estrangement is central to understanding why Black students are less likely than their White peers to support policies allowing campus carry. There

are notable gender differences in how legal estrangement informs support for campus carry, highlighting the merit of intersectional understandings of whether and why students support guns on campus. Black men are less likely to support campus carry than White men largely because of their experiences with police injustice. These mechanisms are consistent with the lived experiences of Black men, who are taught from an early age that their lives often depend on learning to navigate in a world that views them as dangerous and criminal (Elliott and Reid 2019; Gonzalez 2019; Dow 2016). Qualitative comments from Black men show that they, indeed, fear being misjudged as criminals by people with guns, whether these people be police or peers. Further, Black women are less likely to support campus carry than White women, and this is explained by personal and vicarious experiences with police injustice. Like Black men, Black women learn through personal and vicarious experiences that they are at risk in encounters with the police. Responses to open-ended questions by Black women indicate that they have even less faith in students who might view themselves as citizen protectors with guns than they do with armed police officers.

### **DISCUSSION**

Legal estrangement theory posits that structural and cultural factors coalesce to influence the extent to which individuals feel the law and its enforcers operate to either include or exclude them from society (Bell 2017). I extended the legal estrangement perspective to consider whether structural (experiences with police justice) and cultural (legal cynicism and fear of crime) components of legal estrangement influence support for campus carry among men and women currently in college. Drawing on a large body of research that demonstrates how race and gender intersect to inform unique lived experiences that shape attitudes toward the law and criminal

justice actors, I derived and assessed hypotheses about the role legal estrangement factors play in understanding the Black-White race gap in support for campus carry across gender. It is notable that there is overall not a good deal of support for campus carry policies on campus. While 62% of White men expressed support or strong support for campus carry, only 34% of White women, 25% of Black men, and 8% of Black women support campus carry. Thus, the real focus of my legal estrangement model might best be understood as explaining why the vast majority of students, and particularly the vast majority of Black students, do not support campus carry.

My findings show that legal estrangement is relevant for understanding different levels of support for campus carry and for understanding particularly suppressed support for campus carry among Black students. My work shows that legal estrangement fits into the campus carry nexus because students (predominately White men) who feel worthy of protection and like they are a part of the legal system and society are more likely to see themselves as citizen protectors and extensions of law enforcement than are other students. This translates into more support campus carry among White men than among other groups on campus. Indeed, White men discuss their "duty to protect" the campus community and describe themselves as "good guys with guns" who are needed to "stop the bad guy with a gun." Several White women discuss themselves as the potential benefactors of such protection. Black students, who feel more estranged from the law based on their experiences, are not prone to describe themselves as extensions of law enforcement. Instead, Black students discuss fears of becoming victims of so-called citizen protectors. Black women, in particular, express less faith in their classmates with guns than they do in armed police officers, of whom they are also somewhat skeptical.

The findings in this paper are important because research and policy debates have not centered the idea that allowing guns on campus is likely to be an added source of race-gender inequality, campus estrangement, and feelings of fear on campus. My research clearly shows the benefit of considering how legal estrangement informs attitudes toward campus carry and creates several avenues for future research to further unpack complexities of inequality, lived experiences, legal estrangement, and attitudes and behaviors surrounding campus carry. Future research should focus, for instance, on understanding links between feelings of estrangement, fear, and the ability to focus on academics. Black students' open-ended responses to questions about campus carry indicated they see the focus on guns as detrimental to the learning environment with statements like: "Book good. Gun bad" and "Bring a pencil not a gun." These statements echo Rios' (2017) arguments that schools need to focus efforts on treating young people in school corridors as students who are there to learn and not as suspects who have shown up to commit crimes.

Further research should also consider links between intersections of race and gender, legal estrangement, and actually engaging in campus carry in contexts where guns are allowed. Prior research suggests there may be a disconnect between supporting campus carry and actually carrying guns, and it is quite important to unpack the paradox of Black students not supporting campus carry but reporting that if policy allowed, they would give in and carry a gun on campus (Satterfield and Wallace 2020). My research suggests this may be on account of the fear induced by campus carry laws, but further work is needed to see if this is indeed the case and to unpack the competing and contradictory thoughts Black students have to balance with respect to fear and protection.

Future theorizing and research is also needed to consider how additional intersecting identities – ethnicity, nationality, class, sexual identity, ability, religion, and so on – influence feelings of legal estrangement and ultimately views on campus carry. Emerging research shows,

for instance, that members of the LGBTQIA+ community consistently report that they cannot rely on the police for protection (Peterson and Panfil 2014; Owen et al. 2018; Walters et al. 2020) and are the targets of hate crimes by citizens and police (Meyer 2010, 2012; Feddes and Jonas 2020). It is important to consider how experiences of multiple and intersecting inequalities inform lived experiences and attitudes toward campus carry if we want to fully understand such attitudes and how policies allowing campus carry can adversely affect university and college experiences among those who are made to feel estranged from the law and society.

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# **APPENDIX**

Appendix A

**Appendix A. Descriptive Statistics** 

	N	Mean	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Gender Composition <sup>5</sup>			
Men (1)	1332	1.545	.498
Women (2)	1597		
Race Composition <sup>6</sup>			
Black (1)	319	2.108	.683
White (2)	2196		
Asian (3)	192		
Other race (4)	222		
Age			
Under 20 (0)	1347	.540	.498
21 and Over (1)	1582		
Rural			
Urban (0)	2208	.246	.431
Rural (1)	721		
Poverty			
Not Impoverished (0)	2854	.026	.158
Impoverished (1)	75		
Campus Carry Policy			
Guns Not Allowed (0)	1159	.604	.489
Guns Allowed (1)	1170		
<b>Campus Carry Views</b>			
Strongly Oppose (1)	838		
Oppose (2)	501	2.853	1.513
Unsure (3)	424		
Favor (4)	585		
Strongly Favor (5)	581		

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Of the six universities sampled, the gender percent breakdown is 51.50% women and 48.50% men.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Of the six universities sampled, the race percent breakdown is 57.64% White, 10.78% Black, 5.69% Asian, and 10.69% other race.